IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claims

Claim 1. (Currently amended) A network stack interface for communication between software stack layers during network storage data transfer, wherein the network stack interface is defined for communication between a transport layer and another ~~any higher~~ layer in the software stack layers, the network stack interface comprising:

a first network stack interface comprising a header portion and a first buffer descriptor, the [a] header portion defining characteristics of the first network stack interface [;] and the first [a] buffer descriptor defining a data buffer, the first buffer descriptor including a memory address pointer to the data buffer, the first buffer descriptor being one of a plurality of buffer descriptors; ~~wherein information and the memory address pointer is passed between software stack layers via the network stack interface that is defined between the transport layer and any higher layer;~~

wherein a target software stack layer creates a second ~~the~~ network stack interface, the second network stack interface comprises a second buffer descriptor for storing information and the memory address pointer of the first buffer descriptor, and the first target software stack layer passes the second network stack interface to the another software stack layer; and [,] ~~and the buffer descriptor is one of a plurality of buffer descriptors, that defines the data that is common to the plurality of buffer descriptors, and the plurality of buffer descriptors define transport layer header data~~

wherein the passing of the created second network stack interface to the another software stack layer ~~a selected one of the plurality of buffer descriptors stores a memory address and length of a buffer and~~ references the information and memory address pointer of the first

buffer descriptor for storage in the second ~~and length of the buffer to a next selected one of the plurality of~~ buffer descriptor of the second network stack interface ~~descriptors~~ .

Claim 2. (Currently amended) A network stack interface as recited in claim 1, wherein the header portion includes a common header portion and a layer specific header portion, the layer specific header portion defining characteristics utilized by a particular related software stack layer.

Claim 3. (Currently amended) A network stack interface as recited in claim 1, wherein each ~~a selected one~~ of the plurality of buffer descriptors further includes buffer length data, the buffer length data defining a size for the data buffer referenced by the memory address pointer.

Claims 4. – 8. (Canceled)

Claim 9. (Currently amended) A network stack interface as recited in claim 1 [7], wherein the first [a] buffer descriptor ~~from the plurality of buffer descriptors~~ defines transport layer header data.

Claim 10. (Currently amended) A network stack interface as recited in claim 9, wherein the transport layer header data is simple transport protocol (STP) header data.

Claims 11 – 21. (Canceled)